

Obama deficit commission to merely maintain defense spending at its post-WWII high, and who deemed a "crisis" the idea of a 1 percent—\$5 billion—reduction in the 2011 defense budget compared to 2010.

Some on Capitol Hill, such as the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Buck McKeon (R-Calif.), blanch at the idea of restraining defense spending, claiming it would be "dangerous" to do anything but grow the defense budget while the nation is "at war."

They don't just ignore the facts, they torture them—but that's nothing new in politics. What is different, however, is that the aggressive ignorance about the defense budget is beginning to shrivel, revealing a new paradigm: the defense budget is outrageously bloated.

The new conventional wisdom is that we now spend more on the Pentagon than at any time since WWII, and that President Obama will exceed George W. Bush's defense spending. Some even appreciate that he will also exceed Ronald Reagan's. Others understand defense spending does not just exceed a few other functions in presidents' budgets, it exceeds them all, except one—Social Security. In most cases, DOD doesn't just exceed the others; it is multiples of them.

During the Cold War, we averaged \$450 billion annual Pentagon budgets. Today, with no massive conventional threat and a much-diminished nuclear one, we operate at spending levels more than \$200 billion higher, if you include funding for the wars—almost \$100 billion higher if you do not.

The distortion of a lesser threat compelling more spending is propelling the paradigm shift.

Moreover, the wars we have been fighting are against poorly trained and equipped irregulars. It is not to diminish the sacrifice the national leadership extracts from the men and women who serve in Afghanistan and, previously, Iraq, but today's conflicts are—materially—minor events compared to the wars in Korea and Vietnam, when we deployed hundreds of thousands more and faced more than 200 Soviet and Warsaw Pact divisions in Europe.

While we have spent more than \$1.3 trillion for Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 (in inflation-adjusted 2011 dollars), we also added another trillion dollars to the parts of the defense budget that the Pentagon tells us is not for the wars—the so-called "base" budget.

Just before 9/11 we were operating at an annual level of spending for the Pentagon at \$400 billion. Today, in the same inflation-adjusted dollars, we are operating at a "base" budget level well above \$500 billion. It is in that context that we are told by Gates and McKeon that a 1 percent reduction in a single year constitutes a "crisis" or something "dangerous."

The real crisis is what has been happening to our forces. With a \$300 billion increase in funding, the Navy's "battleforce" shrank from 318 ships in 2000 to 287 in 2010. With more than \$300 billion added to its budget, the Air Force shrank from 146 combat squadrons to 72. The Army burned another \$300 billion to increase brigade combat team equivalents from 44 to just 46. According to data from the Congressional Budget Office, this includes not a smaller, newer equipment inventory, but an older one.

Worse, the Pentagon can't track its own inventory, financial transactions, or even what it has paid out to contractors and received in return. Despite the accountability clause of the Constitution, the General Accounting Act of 1921, and the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, the Pentagon has maintained itself in a state where it cannot be audited.

But then, if I were presiding over this mess, I would want not you to know the facts either.

HONORING DON ROBERTSON

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 4, 2011

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Don Robertson of Marietta, Georgia.

For 26 years, Don has been the headmaster of The Walker School. This school year will be his last as he embarks on a much deserved retirement. The Cobb County Community is sad to see such a great educator leave but we are grateful that he and his family have been such an integral part of our community.

What makes him such a respected educator is that Don has always been willing to assist a student in need. Although he would never volunteer this information, Don has paid the reenrollment fees for countless students to continue their higher education at Walker. This is a common occurrence with a co-worker from all of his 26 years commenting "if only I had a nickel for every dollar he contributed to tuition of his students . . ."

Mr. Speaker, Don often is introduced by his own faculty as "The World's Best Headmaster." He has been a formidable mentor to young faculty. So much so, many of his mentees have gone on to be principals and headmasters themselves at other educational institutions.

Don is always willing to give his all to the betterment of the Walker community. During the annual silent auction, Don offers up his culinary skills with all proceeds going to the school. "Won-ton Don" prepares from scratch an Oriental meal for the winning bid, which is always one of the most popular items at the auction.

Mr. Speaker, Don has been a strategic planner for The Walker School and it has never been more evident than today. When Don first came to Walker in 1985, the school had 450 students and one building. Under Don's leadership, Walker recently completed an \$11.5 million building program which significantly enhanced the academic and athletic facilities. Today, he leaves the school with a student population of 1,038, 34 acres of land, more than 1 million square feet of teaching space, seven buildings that house three libraries, two gymnasiums, three dining halls, a technology center, Preschool, Lower School, and Middle and Upper Schools. Without question, Don built Walker to what it is today.

Walker's Mission is to provide an excellent college-preparatory education in a nurturing environment that values personal integrity, prizes creativity, and inspires the lifelong love of learning. It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that Don Robertson has done just that.

Don compiled a faculty of substance to help prepare students for college and for life. The school has over 180 professional staff members, with advanced degrees held by 71 percent of Walker's lead teachers. Don believes in his faculty. At every faculty meeting, he draws the name of a teacher out of a hat. Whichever teacher he draws, he substitutes for them for the entire day, giving them a much deserved day of rest.

It is no small task but Don has cultivated a learning environment that students want to immerse themselves in. As a mathematics instructor, Don has made students appreciate the subject, which in and of itself is a huge accomplishment. Tellingly, 100 percent of The Walker School graduates are accepted to a college or university.

When asked about what makes The Walker School special, Don stated: "An intangible spirit exists in the faces of our students, during conversations with our committed faculty and staff, visits from our alumni, and in the dedicated work of our volunteers and parents."

Mr. Speaker, Don is a devoted father and grandfather of three. I know he is looking forward to being able to spend more time with his grandchildren.

Don, I thank you for your service to the children of Cobb County and I wish you the best in the next chapter of your life.

I ask my colleagues to please join me in thanking Don Robertson for his commitment to the education of our Nation's future leaders and the betterment of his community.

IN HONOR OF JOSEPH J. HUNT,
PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF BRIDGE,
STRUCTURAL, ORNAMENTAL,
AND REINFORCING IRON-
WORKERS

HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 4, 2011

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of a good friend and tremendous labor leader, Joseph J. Hunt. Joe has dedicated his life to improving the lives of working men and women.

Joseph J. Hunt was elected General President of the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers on February 23, 2001. A native of St. Louis, Missouri, he is a third generation ironworker. His father, Joseph Hunt, Sr., and his grandfather, Jim Hunt, both held offices in Iron Workers Local Union No. 396, St. Louis. As his father and grandfather before him, Joe has held numerous positions in Local No. 396 including that of Business Manager. In 1983 he was appointed a General Organizer and assigned to International Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He first served as Assistant to the Director of Jurisdiction and then became Assistant to the General Treasurer. In 1990, he returned to St. Louis and was elected President of the Iron Workers District Council of St. Louis. In 1994, Joe was appointed General Vice President and in December of 1998 he was appointed General Treasurer.

Between May and July of 2001, Joe was both elected as an Executive Board Member of the Maritime Trades Department and as a Vice President of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Subsequently, in August of the same year, he was elected as an Executive Board Member of the Metal Trades Department.

During his distinct career, Joe served as a member of the Governing Board of Presidents of the Building and Construction Trades Department and the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the National Coordinating Committee for Multiemployer Plans. While he